

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1607

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 6020

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PINR, CG, LI

SUBJECT: NEW LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE

REF: KINSHASA 6879

1. PER REFTEL REQUEST, POST TRANSMITTING FOLLOWING BIO REPORT
ON RECENTLY APPOINTED LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE, GABRIEL GBLOR
FARNGALO:

2. AMBASSADOR FARNAGALO WAS BORN MARCH 15, 1926, IN BEHPLAY,
CENTRAL PROVINCE, LIBERIA. HE WAS EDUCATED AT CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL AT SANIQUELLIE, NIMBA COUNTY; CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
AT BUCHANAN, BASSA COUNTY; RECEIVED B.S. E. FROM UNIVERSITY OF
LIBERIA, MONROVIA, AND AN M.S. DEGREE FROM UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN (SEPTEMBER 1957 - SEPTEMBER 1958). PREVIOUS POSITIONS
HELD INCLUDED: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN RURAL LIBERIA;
INSTRUCTOR AT UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA (1958-59?); PROVINCIAL
SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOLS, CENTRAL PROVINCE (1958-1974); SUPERINTENDENT
OF NIMBA COUNTY FROM SEPTEMBER 1964 TO AUGUST 1963; (SUSPENDED FROM
OFFICE MAY 1968; DISMISSED AUGUST 1968; ARRESTED SEPTEMBER 1968
FOR EMBEZZLEMENT; COUNSELLOR AND CONSUL, LIBERIAN EMBASSY IN
ROME (1972-1974); AND COUNSELLOR AND CONSUL, LIBERIAN EMBASSY IN
WASHINGTON, D. C. (1974-1976).

3. BORN OF TRIBAL PARENTS (HIS FATHER WAS MEMBER OF LIBERIAN
FRONTIER FORCE), GABRIEL FARNGALO TAUGHT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN
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RURAL LIBERIA FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 YEARS BEFORE COMING IN TO NATIONAL

PROMINENCE. IT WAS FOLLOWING HIS RETURN IN 1958 FROM ONE-YEAR PROGRAM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUPERVISION AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN THAT FARNGALO ATTRACTED ATTENTION OF LATE PRESIDENT TUBMAN WHO MARKED FARNGALO AS AN AMBITIOUS AND LOYAL TRIBAL MAN SUITED FOR GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES. TUBMAN APPOINTED FARNGALO FIRST IN 1959 AS PROVINCIAL SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOLS FOR THE CENTRAL PROVINCE, AND THEN IN 1964 AS SUPERINTENDENT OF NIMBA COUNTY. EMBASSY BIO NOTES IN EARLY 1960'S LABELED FARNGALO A CAPABLE, COOPERATIVE, PRO-AMERICAN AND AMBITIOUS TRIBAL MAN WHO HAD "MADE GOOD" AND WHO HELD THE POTENTIAL OF "GREAT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA." ONE REPORT NOTED THAT FARNGALO ASPIRED TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA.

4. APPARENTLY, AS A SUPERINTENDENT FARNGALO PUT DISCRETION ASIDE, HE BECAME KNOWN FOR HIS GREED, CORRUPTION AND ABUSE OF THE TRIBAL POPULATION UNDER HIS CONTROL. ACTIVE IN THE ANNUAL PREPARATIONS FOR TUBMAN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION, FARNGALO EXTORTED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE CELEBRATION FROM FOREIGN CONCESSIONS OPERATING IN NIMBA (NOTABLY THE SWEDISH-AMERICAN MINING CONCERN LAMCO). HIS ABUSES OF OFFICE WERE BROUGHT TO AN END WHEN SEVERAL OF THE CHIEFS OF TRIBES IN NIMBA COUNTY IN 1968 PETITIONED TUBMAN TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE SUPERINTENDENT. THE SECRETARY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS FOUND EVIDENCE "OF COMMISSION OF NUMEROUS CRIMES OF BOTH FELONIES AND MISDEMEANORS" AND ORDERED THAT FARNGALO BE DISMISSED. FARNGALO WAS ACCUSED OF EMBEZZLING OVER \$54,000 WHICH INCLUDED FUNDS FROM COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, ILLEGAL FINES IMPOSED UPON TRIBAL PEOPLE, AND FUNDS EXTORTED FROM LAMCO. AFTER BEING IMPRISONED FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, FARNGALO WAS RELEASED, APPARENTLY ON ORDERS FROM TUBMAN.

5. IN 1970 FARNGALO PETITIONED TUBMAN TO CONSIDER HIM "FOR SOMETHING TO DO BECAUSE (I) HAVE SAT PATIENTLY FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS WITHOUT ANYTHING TO DO." TUBMAN IGNORED REQUEST.

6. FARNGALO'S PROSPECTS BRIGHTENED AGAIN IN FEBRUARY 1972 WHEN HE MARRIED PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S SPINSTER SISTER, ELFRIEDA. AFTER THE MARRIAGE, FARNGALO WAS COMMISSIONED A MEMBER OF THE LIBERIAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND BEGAN DIPLOMATIC CAREER AS COUNSELLOR AND CONSUL IN ROME.

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7. AS SUPERINTENDENT, FARNGALO WAS NOTED FOR EXPENSIVE TASTES IN CLOTHES AND HIS PREFERENCE FOR LARGE FORMAL PARTIES.
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